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Rep. Thomas Stevens
Chair, House General & Housing Committee
Montpelier, VT

Dear Mr. Stevens, et al,

I'm writing to you today as a small (tiny) landlord with a single 2-unit property in the Town of Hinesburg. I recently spent \$19,943.30 on likely-unnecessary lead remediation at my property, and now I find that I'm facing even more regulation to maintain compliance. I say my expense was likely unnecessary because everyone involved agreed that I did not have any lead paint to deal with, but that Health Dept regulations were such that it would be best to act as if it was lead paint and proceed accordingly. The issue arose because the Health Dept will not recognize the nationally-accepted method of lead paint detection. Frustrating and expensive, to be sure.

Regardless, I followed the rules, spent the \$20,000, and will recover the unnecessary costs by raising the rent in both units indefinitely. I am highly sympathetic to the plight of renters, but at the same time, I quite literally have bills to pay.

Now, I've learned that the Health Dept is again burdening small landlords by requiring more licensing, more training, more insurance and huge expenses relating to hiring special painters. Because there are so few certified painting contractors available in the state, they can (and do) charge whatever they like. I happened to contract with Polli Construction, also out of Hinesburg, after reaching out to almost 30 contractors!

I am asking you to support bill H.184 which I believe returns some sanity to the situation and does not burden small landlords like me with excessive regulation that directly impacts rents. I do not have dozens of units over which I can spread the regulatory expense. I have two.

It concerns me that effectively, I can never re-paint my property without spending thousands of dollars. Therefore, I won't paint the property, nor will I make any improvements to the property that require paint. How is this good for anyone involved? If I am forced to paint, it's not like I make thousands of dollars in profit every year, so there's no way for me to simply absorb the cost. Instead, it will be passed on to my (two) tenants in increments of a few hundred dollars more in rent every month. I'm not generating any more profit, and my tenants will effectively pay for this over-reaching regulation.

In a balanced world, my line of reasoning would encourage my tenants to find a cheaper and better place to live. But since this will apply to every single landlord in the state, we must expect that rents will increase universally and significantly. I am a landlord, yes, but I also have 5 adult children who are renters just barely covering their housing costs. I am concerned from both points of view.

Full Disclosure: I currently rent each of my units to two daughters, one of whom is a parent to my grandson. I am highly motivated to keep my units safe, "nice" and in full compliance with all laws. I am also highly conscious of the economic pressure I'm putting on my girls, and I don't like it!

I appreciate your attention to this bill,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy White', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Timothy White